

## Montana Transportation Planning Efforts Receive National Recognition



*Federal Highway Administration Division Administrator Kevin McLaury (right) presents MDT Director Jim Lynch with one of four awards Montana planning efforts received through the 2008 National Transportation Planning Excellence Awards Program.*

Montana led all other states in the number of national awards recently awarded for outstanding and innovative transportation planning efforts.

The Transportation Planning Excellence Awards Program, which is co-sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, and the American Planning Association, awarded three excellence and one honorable mention awards to Montana transportation planning efforts.

In accepting the awards, MDT Director Jim Lynch noted that, although MDT's first priority is to develop planning processes that result in cost-effective improvements appropriate for Montana's sometimes unique conditions, the national recognition demonstrates many of these processes can also serve as models for other states.

"These awards show Montana is considered a national leader in transportation planning," Lynch said. Lynch also noted that, although MDT was listed as the recipient or co-recipient of these awards, he was accepting the awards on behalf of every local, state, federal, and tribal agency, official, and staff person involved in the planning efforts.

The 2008 Transportation Planning Excellence Awards Program recognized the following Montana efforts:

### Montana Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan

MDT successfully established and has maintained a collaborative safety planning process involving active participation by state government, local agencies, and Montana's tribal nations. This process led to the development of a comprehensive safety plan to reduce fatalities and injuries on Montana's highways. Other states have used Montana's planning process as a model for their safety plans.

### Tribal Highway Safety Planning

Recognizing the disproportionate number of highway fatalities involving Montana's Native American population, MDT has worked with other state, federal, and local agencies and Montana's eight tribal governments to develop and implement planning initiatives that address the unique highway safety needs of Montana's Native Americans. This collaborative effort serves as a model for other states.

### Design of US-93 Corridor Reconstruction - Evaro to Polson

MDT, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, and FHWA's Montana Division Office shared in this award for their collaborative context-sensitive approach to the planning and design of improvements to this scenic segment of the National Highway System. The resulting highway improvements, which FHWA has referred to as a "hallmark of context-sensitive design," respect the unique cultural, scenic, and environmental nature of the corridor while addressing significant highway safety and capacity needs.

### Performance Programming Process

A recipient of an Honorable Mention Award, MDT's Performance Programming Process (P<sup>3</sup>) allows Montana to develop and implement an optimal fiscally constrained highway funding plan based on information from its management systems. The plan is consistent with policies established by TranPlan 21, Montana's statewide multimodal transportation plan. MDT and the Montana Transportation Commission use P<sup>3</sup> to annually evaluate investment alternatives to determine an equitable distribution of funds that achieves highway performance goals for pavement, bridge, and congestion.

Contact Lynn Zanto at 444-3445 or Carol Strizich at 444-9240 for more information about MDT's transportation planning programs and processes.

## MDT Deputy Director Currie and Planning Administrator Straehl Retiring

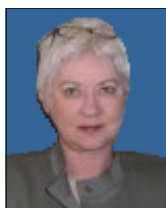


MDT Director Jim Lynch recently announced that Deputy Director Jim Currie and Transportation Planning Administrator Sandy Straehl will retire at the end of December. "Montana benefited from Sandy's and Jim's efforts to improve the funding and management of Montana's transportation systems and services," Lynch noted.

"We'll miss their knowledge, dedication, and energy."

Jim Currie started his career with the state of Montana in 1977 as a management analyst for the Department of Administration. In 1978, Jim took a job with the Montana Development Center in Boulder as the Centralized Services manager and Fiscal Services director. After seven years, he moved on to the Department of Institutions as an administrator. In 1992 he joined the financial staff at MDT working as Budget Section supervisor. Jim was named the deputy director of MDT in 1994, a position he has held for the last 14 years. In total, Jim has served the state of Montana for 30 years, 16 of those with MDT. He has served under six governors and four transportation directors.

Among Jim's many accomplishments at MDT was his key role in negotiations to rebuild US Highway 93 through the Flathead Nation. After nearly 20 years of debate on the future of this important highway, Jim was part of the team that finally reached an accord. He was recognized for his efforts in 2001 with the Governor's Award for Excellence.



Sandy Straehl is retiring after nearly 24 years of dedicated service. A recipient of Excellence in Performance Awards from two governors, Sandy was a long-time member of the Transportation Research Board's Statewide Multimodal Transportation Planning and Asset Management Committees and the recipient of a Special Award of Merit from the

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. The Montana Interdepartmental Coordinating Committee for Women recognized Sandy's achievements in 2006 with its Excellence in Leadership Award.

In addition to her involvement in the development of three federal transportation authorization acts, Sandy's many achievements include the development of MDT's nationally recognized asset management and safety planning processes. She also developed MDT's corridor planning approach to addressing transportation issues and initiated the development of a career ladder for MDT planning staff.

Nancy Espy, chairwoman of the Montana Transportation Commission expressed her gratitude for Jim's and Sandy's contributions on behalf of the Commission. She noted she has worked with Jim for 12 years and has learned from him at every Commission meeting. "We have all marveled at his recall on projects, funding, and history pertaining to the Department," she added.

Nancy went on to commend Sandy for her knowledge and skills in communicating information on complex federal and state policy, funding, and project issues to the Commission.

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## MDT Studies Montana-Canada Ports and Corridors

MDT recently launched a study to determine how economic developments in Montana and in the Canadian provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan may affect commercial traffic along Montana's north-south highway corridors. The study will begin in January 2009 and be completed in the summer of 2009.

Alberta and Saskatchewan have the fastest growing economies in Canada. Tar sands development in the northern parts of these provinces has been called the world's largest energy project, the world's largest construction project, and the world's largest capital project. Other industries are also doing well. Such developments could bring more traffic through our ports of entry and the highways that serve them.

In response to these developments, elected officials and local leaders have called for expanded port services and improved highways leading to these facilities. MDT's research study, "Impact of Canadian Economic Development on Northern Montana Highways," will estimate future commercial vehicle traffic growth, considering volumes both with and without expanded port-of-entry services.

Analysis will also focus on potential traffic impacts over the north-south highway corridors leading to the nine ports served by paved highways between the Port of Coultts-Sweet Grass (on I-15) and the Port of Regway-Raymond (near Plentywood). Corridors include Secondary Highways 232, 233, 241, and 511; Montana Highways 24, 13, and 16; US Highway 191; and Interstate 15. Impacts to traffic volumes on other highways will also be noted if they are identified during the course of the study.

The consulting firm HDR will conduct the project for MDT with input from an advisory panel. MDT's project research panel chair is Dick Turner (444-7289, [dturner@mt.gov](mailto:dturner@mt.gov)), and the project manager is Craig Abernathy (444-6269, [cabernathy@mt.gov](mailto:cabernathy@mt.gov)).



Port of Coultts-Sweet Grass on Interstate 15 near Shelby

**Currie and Straehl Retiring** *continued from previous column*

John Blacker, former administrator of MDT's Maintenance Division, has been named to replace Jim Currie.

"Sandy and Jim are leaving big shoes to fill, but both have put considerable effort into ensuring their staffs have the knowledge and ability to move forward in their absence," Lynch noted.

"On behalf of the state of Montana, I thank Jim and Sandy for their dedication and contributions to serving the citizens of this great state."



## Anaconda Rest Area Opens



Montana's newest safety rest area on I-90 between Butte and Missoula

Motorists traveling on I-90 between Butte and Missoula can now stop at Montana's newest safety rest area. The innovative year-round

facility near the Anaconda exit on MT 1 is the latest example of MDT's efforts to improve Montana's rest areas in response to public input and the recommendations listed in the Montana Rest Area Plan. The new rest area fills a large gap on I-90 created by the closure of the Homestake Pass rest area due to utility and maintenance issues.

The design of the Anaconda rest area is similar to the popular Mosby and Lookout Pass rest areas. The interior features family-style restrooms, informational displays, and a large, well-lit lobby. Exterior features include picnic shelters, street lighting, and walking paths. A huge copper ladle from the Anaconda Smelter dominates the landscaping. The ladle is so large it took two cranes to move it into position. The rest area will also serve as a trailhead for the future Greenway Trail between Butte and Anaconda.

The rest area's most innovative feature is a 110-foot tall wind-generation tower with 22-foot rotors that provides 10 kilowatts of alternative energy. The tower, which represents the first use of wind generation at a Montana rest area, is part of an experimental project supported by the Federal Highway Administration. MDT will evaluate the project annually to determine the cost savings of wind energy compared to traditional energy.

Anaconda community leaders were very supportive of the project and were involved from the beginning. MDT and Anaconda officials will host a formal ribbon-cutting ceremony for the rest area in the spring of 2009.

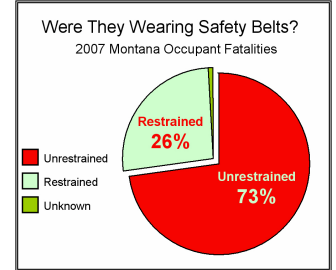
Crossman-Whitney-Griffin Architects of Helena, represented by Anthony Perpignano, designed the facility and Gilman Construction of Butte was the prime contractor with Paul Thompson acting as project manager.

Kevin Fuller, MDT's project manager, successfully coordinated the construction of this innovative rest area, which has already received praise from weary travelers on I-90. Contact Sheila Ludlow at 444-9193 for more information.

## 61st Legislature to Consider Primary Safety Belt Legislation

When it convenes on January 5, the Montana Legislature will be asked to consider primary safety belt legislation that would save lives, reduce health care costs, and reduce the tragic consequences of highway crashes.

Montana laws currently require vehicle occupants to wear safety belts, but do not allow law enforcement officers to stop a vehicle solely because an occupant is not wearing a safety belt. (This includes children who are not in child safety seats.) Law enforcement officers can only enforce the safety belt law when a motorist is stopped for another violation.



In 2007, 158 of the 217 people killed in crashes on Montana highways were not wearing a safety belt. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates Montana will save 20 to 30 lives each year when the state's safety belt usage rate surpasses 90 percent. Montana's current usage rate is 79 percent. Based on what has occurred in other states, a primary safety belt law would likely increase this rate to as much as 94 percent, saving up to 30 lives and preventing many more injuries.

Safety belts also reduce health care costs. An estimated 887 unbelted individuals are hospitalized for care in Montana each year. An estimated 819 admissions (92%) might have been prevented if a safety belt had been used. Caring for these unbelted patients costs over \$36.7 million each year in direct inpatient health care costs. Over one-third of unrestrained occupants had no insurance at the time of their crash (2004-2006 data).

In addition to saving lives and reducing health care costs, safety belts also reduce the tragic consequences of highway crashes especially for the family and friends of victims. For a first-hand account of these often-overlooked impacts visit [www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/room\\_to\\_live.shtml](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/room_to_live.shtml).

## 2009-2010 Official Montana Highway Map on the Way



Stay tuned for the release of the 2009-2010 Official Montana Highway Map in early February. Like last year's map, the new map is 40 percent larger than previous maps and continues to address the needs of the traveling public.

New additions to this year's map include a new color scheme, the South Helena Interchange, the year each county was established, and the location of new roadside interpretive markers showcasing Montana's unique geological and paleontological wonders.

As usual, populations reflect current Census estimates and gas station, hospital, road surfaces, and rail-line information has also been updated. The map continues to display traffic regulations; weather report, road condition, and emergency phone numbers; and a welcome message from Governor Schweitzer.

MDT and Travel Montana will print two million copies of the new map. To order your free copy, call 800-VISIT MT (800-847-4868) or visit [www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/comment\\_form.shtml](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/comment_form.shtml).

# Transportation Safety Planning Assistance Offered

MDT's award-winning approach to comprehensive highway safety planning is the model for a new MDT effort to support similar safety planning in Montana communities.

MDT is seeking requests from local governments interested in receiving technical and financial support to develop Community Transportation Safety Plans using a process similar to the one MDT used to develop the Montana Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan ([www.mdt.mt.gov/publications/docs/brochures/safety/current\\_chsp.pdf](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/publications/docs/brochures/safety/current_chsp.pdf)).

MDT will consider the following factors in selecting successful candidates for assistance:

- Documented community support and involvement from all interests involved in community safety issues (law enforcement, school districts, major employers, elected officials, the public, emergency service providers, safety groups, tribal officials, the judicial system, planners, transportation agencies, etc.).

- Commitment to implement study results and monitor progress in achieving safety goals.
- Commitment to address all four "Es" of transportation safety (enforcement, education, engineering, and emergency services).
- Demonstration of consistency and coordination with other local plans such as transportation plans or Safe Routes to School assessments.

Eligible communities include all incorporated cities. MDT and the Federal Highway Administration are also developing Transportation Safety Plans with tribal governments.

Contact Carol Strizich at 444-9240 or [cstrizich@mt.gov](mailto:cstrizich@mt.gov) for more information about this innovative effort to address transportation safety issues in Montana communities.

## CTEP Spotlight

## CTEP Project Status and Program Update

The Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP) is Montana's unique approach to allocating federal enhancement set-aside funds. This program is a partnership between MDT, the Montana Association of Counties, the League of Cities and Towns, and tribal governments. Over the past 15 years, CTEP has funded hundreds of transportation-related projects designed to enhance the cultural, aesthetic, and environmental aspects of Montana's transportation system.

### CTEP PROJECT STATUS

1992 Thru 2008

Projects Completed .....	460
Projects in Approval Phase .....	13
Projects in Design Phase.....	69
Projects Under Construction.....	41
TOTAL PROJECTS.....	583

### Perspective

- Montana is the only state that sub-allocates its enhancement funds to local and tribal governments.
- Montana is one of very few states that doesn't require a sponsor to overmatch the federal funding (all Montana CTEP projects can be matched at 13.42%).
- Montana is one of very few states that doesn't limit the federal categories of eligibility. As long as guidelines are met, the project moves forward.
- Montana allows projects as small as \$10,000.

MDT elected to sub-allocate the enhancement funds to local and tribal governments for selection and prioritization of local

projects. Funds are distributed to the eligible local governments based on population figures provided by the U.S. Census Bureau. Approximately \$4.5 million is sub-allocated each year. CTEP activities are a sub-component of the Surface Transportation Program (STP), and the federal policy and procedural requirements that apply to the STP also apply to CTEP. A local funding match of 13.42% is required.

For information regarding CTEP, call Mike Wherley at 444-4221 or Ross Tervo at 444-9209, or visit [www.mdt.mt.gov/business/ctep/](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/business/ctep/).



Left to Right, Top to Bottom—Missoula abandoned Milwaukee right of way improved as a bike path, Libby Fireman's Park eagle sculpture, Hysham Yucca Theatre-historic preservation, Main Street Hamilton streetscape design.



## Transit Tales

### International Walk-to-School Day



International Walk-to-School Day was on October 8, 2008. Forty-eight schools across Montana participated in the event designed to create walkable communities and lessen the effects of a sedentary lifestyle for children. Activities included “walking school buses,” “bike trains,” and incorporating walking into the reading curriculum. Some schools gave prizes and incentives for participants including a

healthy breakfast or treats.

Montana supports Walk-to-School education through its Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS). Additional information about the Safe Routes to School Program is available through the SRTS information line, 1-877-935-SAFE (7233) or by visiting the SRTS website [www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/saferoutes/](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/saferoutes/).

### Transit Funding Application Deadline

Applications for FY 2010 transit funding are due March 2, 2009. Application materials are available online at [www.mdt.mt.gov/business/grants\\_transit.shtml](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/business/grants_transit.shtml). Please contact your regional planner if you have any questions.

Western Region - Steven Potuzak 444-4265, [spotuzak@mt.gov](mailto:spotuzak@mt.gov)  
Northern Region - Tom Stuber 444-9216, [tstuber@mt.gov](mailto:tstuber@mt.gov)  
Southern Region - Adam Kraft 444-6120, [akraft@mt.gov](mailto:akraft@mt.gov)  
Urbanized Areas - David Jacobs 444-9192, [djacobs@mt.gov](mailto:djacobs@mt.gov)

## Bicycle and Pedestrian Path Feasibility Study Completed

MDT recently completed a study to determine the feasibility of a bicycle and pedestrian path along state and county road rights-of-way between Helena and Great Falls. The corridor begins at Lincoln Road (Secondary 279) north of Helena and follows Chevallier Drive (county road along Little Prickly Pear Creek) hooking up with Recreation Road (frontage road paralleling Interstate 15) and ending at the Gore Hill Interchange near the Great Falls International Airport.

The technical advisory group for the study included officials from Cascade and Lewis and Clark County, landowners, bicycle advocacy groups, and a representative from the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks. MDT used a corridor analysis process to determine alternative routes. This included analyzing data and existing roadway conditions. MDT also considered environmental, demographic, and socio-economic factors, and possible implementation strategies. MDT collected additional information and comments from the public through meetings, letters, and the Internet.

The study concluded that a continuous separated path along the entire corridor is not feasible on existing public road rights-of-way due to the presence of multiple chokepoints and obstructions. However, shorter segments that can stand alone are Feasible, and a phased approach based on ease of construction, financing, and prioritization is possible.

Local and state government agencies and/or other public entities can use the study results to provide bicycle and pedestrian facilities within the corridor. There are no funding commitments associated with the study at this time.

For more information, contact Ian Payton at 444-9238 or visit MDT’s website at [www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/bikepath](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/bikepath).

## Cut Bank-West Reconstruction Completed

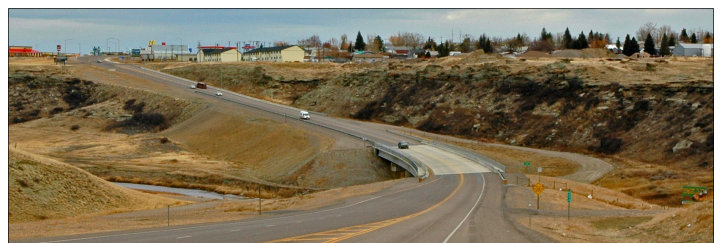
MDT recently completed the reconstruction of US Highway 2 from Cut Bank to about eight miles west of Cut Bank on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. The project resulted in a wider, safer highway for drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians and enhanced the western entrance to Cut Bank.

In addition to widening the nearly 80-year-old highway from 26 feet to 42 feet, the project added turn bays, two-way left-turn lanes, and sidewalks, curbs, gutters, and storm drains in Cut Bank. Improvements also included replacing the 28-foot wide bridge over Cut Bank Creek with a 52-foot wide structure. The new bridge has two 12-foot travel lanes, two six-foot shoulders, and two five-foot-wide separated bicycle and pedestrian paths.

The Cut Bank-West Project completed the reconstruction of the 33-mile section of US Highway 2 between Browning and Cut Bank. The highway now meets the modern, safer standards necessary to support the local economies and the transportation needs of the many users of this important Hi-Line highway.



*US 2 west of Cut Bank before reconstruction*



*US 2 west of Cut Bank after reconstruction*

# Multimodal Transportation Funding and Planning Assistance for Montana Communities

Montana's local governments face numerous challenges in improving and maintaining their transportation infrastructure and services. Transportation needs outpace available funding at all levels.

MDT administers many funding and planning programs that help local governments address their local transportation needs. These range from funding programs for highway projects, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, transit capital and operating assistance, and transportation safety, planning, and research support.

Following are some of the MDT-administered programs that support local projects:



## Infrastructure

### Surface Transportation Program-Urban (STPU)\* - Federal funds

and state matching funds are allocated to Montana's 15 urban areas (areas with a population greater than 5,000) for improvements to the Urban Highway System. Priorities are identified at the local level through established planning processes that include the public. Although funds are used primarily for street reconstruction, rehabilitation, and traffic operation improvements, state law allows these funds to be applied for all uses eligible under federal law. MDT also directs additional federal and state funds to address backlogged needs on the Urban Highway System in Montana's most rapidly growing urban areas (identified through Census data). For more information, contact Lynn Zanto at 444-3445.

**Surface Transportation Program-Secondary (STPS)\*** - Federal and state matching funds are allocated based on a statutory formula for improvements on Montana's Secondary Highway System. MDT and county commissioners in each MDT district identify priorities within each district. Eligible activities include reconstruction, rehabilitation, and pavement preservation improvements. For more information, contact Wayne Noem at 444-6109.

*\*Note: Montana continued the above programs at the state level after Congress eliminated the Federal-aid Primary, Secondary, and Urban Systems in 1991.*

**Fuel Tax Allocations** - Counties and cities receive a portion of state fuel tax receipts based on statutory formulas for the construction, reconstruction, maintenance, and repair of rural roads and city or town streets and alleys. For more information, contact Ed Ereth at 444-6111 or visit [www.mdt.mt.gov/business/fueltax](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/business/fueltax).

**Urban Highway Pavement Preservation** - Federal funds and state matching funds are provided for cost-effective treatments to Urban Highway System routes. Priorities are identified through MDT district and local government consultation based on pavement management systems maintained at the local level. These improvements preserve the system, delay roadway deterioration, and improve roadway condition without adding capacity. For more information, contact Gary Larson at 444-6110.

**Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP)** MDT, the Montana Association of Counties, and the League of Cities and Towns cooperated in the development of this unique

program in 1992 after federal laws mandated that each state direct 10 percent of the federal Surface Transportation Program funds to transportation enhancement projects. Unlike enhancement programs in other states, CTEP provides funds by formula to cities, counties and tribal governments for locally selected enhancement projects. Eligible projects include bicycle and pedestrian facilities, landscaping and scenic beautification, mitigation of water pollution due to highway run off, rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation structures and facilities.



Local and tribal officials have directed approximately half of all CTEP funds to bicycle and pedestrian projects since the beginning of the program. For more information, contact Mike Wherley at 444-4221 or visit [www.mdt.mt.gov/business/ctep/](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/business/ctep/).

**Safe Routes to School (SRTS)** - This program provides federal funding for efforts to improve the safety of K-8 students who walk or bicycle to school. Local governments, tribal governments and school districts are eligible recipients of this funding.

Seventy percent of SRTS funding must go to infrastructure improvements to bicycle/pedestrian facilities including crosswalks, sidewalks, and new or improved bicycle/pedestrian routes to school. For more information contact, Audrey Allums at 444-4210 or visit [www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/saferoutes/](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/saferoutes/).

**Montana Air & Congestion Initiative (MACI)** - This unique MDT program provides funds for strategies to proactively address air quality issues related to carbon monoxide and particulate matter. Projects in eligible nonattainment or at-risk areas are prioritized and selected based on air quality benefits. The most cost-effective projects since the beginning of the program have been the purchase of street sweepers and flush trucks necessary to reduce particulate matter and the funding of intersection improvements and signal synchronization projects to reduce carbon monoxide emissions. For more information, please contact Janet Kenny at 444-7294.



**Transit** - Federal funding programs administered by MDT support community transit systems with operating, capital, and facility costs. A locally developed coordination plan is required which must include general public services as well as services for the transportation dependent such as the disabled and elderly. Federal Health and Human Services funds may be used to match federal transit funds. For more information, contact Audrey Allums at 444-4210 or visit [www.mdt.mt.gov/business/grants\\_transit.shtml](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/business/grants_transit.shtml).

**Montana Rail Freight Loan Programs** - MDT administers two programs that provide loans for railroad branch line improvements including construction, reconstruction, or rehabilitation of rail lines and related facilities. Eligible parties include railroad owners and operators and certain port authorities. For more information, contact Hal Fossum at 444-6116.



## Non-Infrastructure Planning and Technical Assistance

- **Multimodal Transportation Plans** - Outside of Billings, Great Falls, and Missoula, there are no federal or state requirements for local transportation plans. However, MDT provides financial and technical support for transportation planning in other Montana communities, including some of our fastest growing cities. These cooperative planning efforts are usually managed by the local land-use planning offices to ensure consistency with other planning efforts. The plans help identify deficiencies, needs, and funding to ensure an efficient, safe, and modern transportation system. For more information, contact Lynn Zanto 444-3445.

- **Travel Demand Forecasting** - MDT develops and maintains state-of-the-art computer models in Montana's larger communities to forecast future travel demand and analyze alternative transportation improvements to accommodate existing and future demand. MDT works with cities, counties, and other government agencies in the development of these models, which help inform decisions about future transportation network needs. For more information, contact Lynn Zanto at 444-3445.



- **Safety Planning** - MDT recently initiated a program that provides technical and financial assistance to local governments for the development of Community Transportation Safety Plans. Through a coordinated process, involved agencies identify the specific transportation safety issues in a community, develop strategies to address those issues, and determine the responsible agency/person to monitor implementation of each strategy. These planning efforts must address all aspects of safety including engineering, enforcement, education and emergency services. Communities must demonstrate a commitment to implement and monitor progress. For more information, contact Carol Strizich at 444-9240.

- **Systems Impact Analysis Process (SIAP)** - MDT's SIAP ensures a coordinated review of major developments initiated outside of MDT that may significantly and permanently impact the state transportation system. Process goals include preserving the safety, operational efficiency, and integrity of Montana's transportation system and protecting taxpayer investments in the transportation system by ensuring the public does not bear the costs of transportation improvements necessary to safely accommodate proposed developments.

MDT coordinates development reviews with Montana's local governments to ensure their concerns are addressed and provides technical assistance to local governments interested in developing local processes similar to SIAP. For more information, contact Jim Skinner at 444-9233.

## Information & Education

- **Research Programs** - MDT conducts research to discover, develop, or extend knowledge needed to operate, maintain and improve Montana's multimodal transportation system. Interested parties can propose research topics by December 31 each year through MDT's annual solicitation process. Guidelines are available at [www.mdt.mt.gov/research/unique/solicit.shtml](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/research/unique/solicit.shtml). Some examples of past and current MDT research efforts benefiting Montana communities are studies on how highway noise affects growing neighborhoods and tools for decision making. For more information, contact Sue Sillick in MDT's Research Section at 444-7693.

- **Safe Routes to School (SRTS)** - Thirty percent of the SRTS program funds must go to non-infrastructure programs such as traffic education, pedestrian safety training, and campaigns to encourage safe walking and bicycling to school. For more information, contact Audrey Allums at 444-4210 or visit [www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/saferoutes/](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/saferoutes/).

- **State Highway Traffic Safety Programs** - These programs provide funds to local coalitions, law enforcement, and DUI Task Forces to promote the use of occupant restraints and prevent impaired driving. For more information, contact Priscilla Sinclair at 444-7417.

- **Bicyclist and Pedestrian Information Clearinghouse** - MDT's bicycle/pedestrian coordinator reviews planned construction projects for bicycle/pedestrian safety and access issues, distributes state-sponsored bicycle/pedestrian tourism information to interested parties, fields questions and comments from the public on bicycle/pedestrian issues, and acts as a liaison between MDT and bicycle/pedestrian interest groups. For more information, contact Mark Keefe, at 444-9273.



- **Training Courses** - MDT periodically sponsors training courses taught by national experts. Since 1997, for example, MDT has sponsored seven courses in bicyclist and pedestrian accommodation design which were attended by over 200 state and local engineers and planners.

**Data Collection and Management** - MDT collects and maintains information about Montana's transportation system. This information is available to government entities and the public and includes:

- A comprehensive location inventory of all roads open to public travel in Montana including basic physical characteristics such as length, width, and surface type.

- Traffic volume and classification data on roads owned and/or operated by MDT (with some additional data on local roads).

- Mapping and GIS services and products, including the official Montana State Highway map.

For more information, contact Bill Cloud at 444-6114.



**Additional Support** - Most federal-aid funding for projects and programs require non-federal matching funds. Although not required to do so, the state provides matching funds for most infrastructure projects. Additionally, following passage of the last three multi-year federal transportation authorization acts, the state has passed on the growth in federal program funding to programs of importance to local governments through the state-level Urban and Secondary Highway Programs.

Programs that benefit local governments are the result of cooperative state and local efforts to distribute limited funding as fairly as possible. MDT is committed to continued support of local transportation projects and planning to ensure a safe and reliable transportation system for Montana communities. For more information, visit MDT's Rail, Transit and Planning Division website at [www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/organization/railtran.shtml](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/organization/railtran.shtml).

## MDT Wants Your Comments

To receive a list of highway projects MDT plans to present to the Transportation Commission, visit [www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/docs/trans\\_comm/proposed\\_proj.pdf](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/docs/trans_comm/proposed_proj.pdf), or give us a call at 1-800-714-7296. You can mail your comments on proposed projects to MDT at the following address or e-mail them to [mdtnewprojects@mt.gov](mailto:mdtnewprojects@mt.gov).

MDT Project Analysis Chief  
PO Box 201001  
Helena, MT 59620-1001

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## Contact Information

Only the most frequently requested numbers are listed here. For an area or person not listed, call 800-714-7296 (in Montana only) or 406-444-3423. The TTY number is 406-444-7696 or 800-335-7592.

Administrator (Sandra Straehl) .....	444-7692
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